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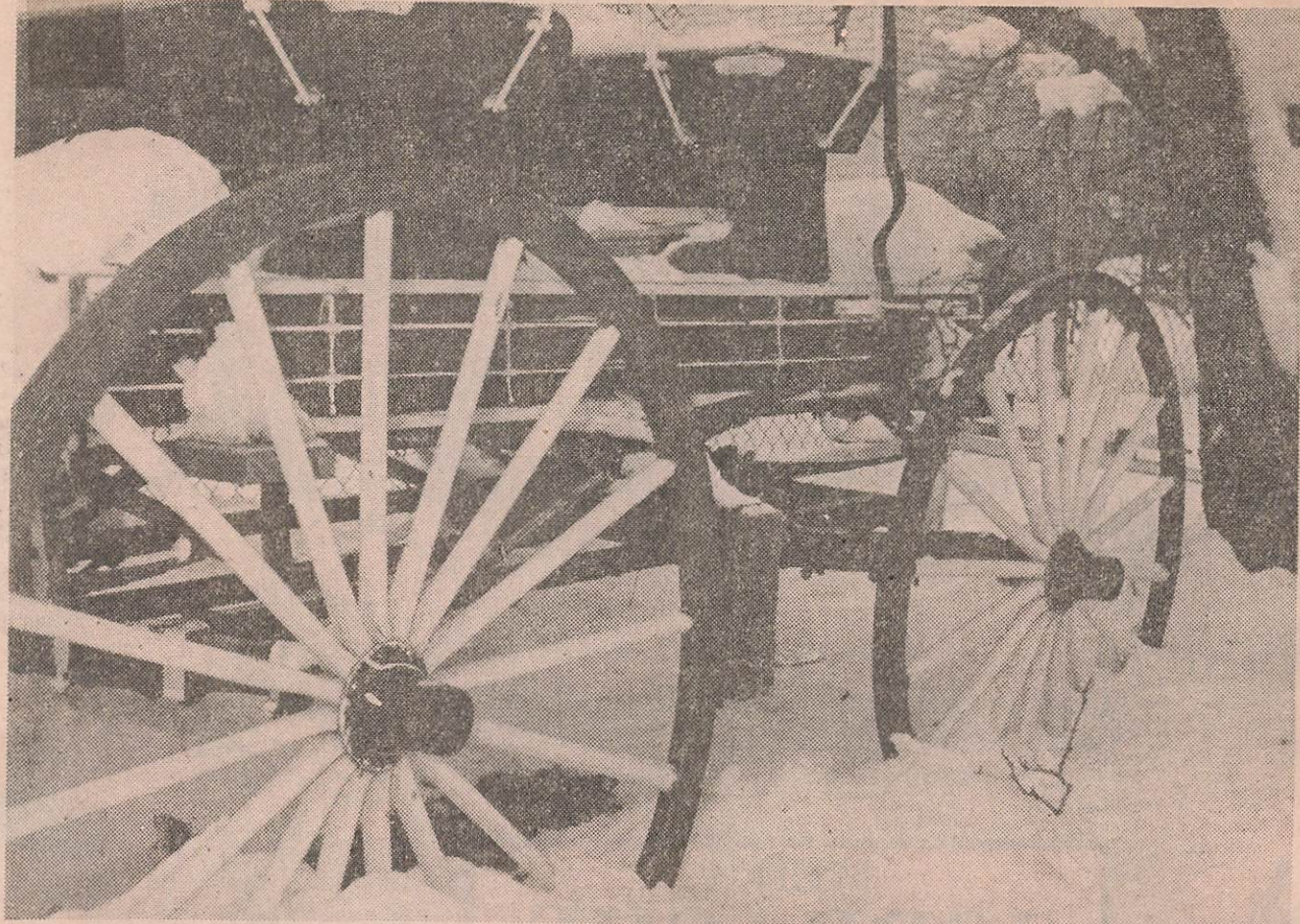
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The first buggy that Randy Randall reconditioned. It is kept outdoors.

PHOTOGRAPHY/ CURT JACKSON

He's hooked on old buggies

Des News

By Curt Jackson

Randy Randall is very much into something that went out with high-buttoned shoes.

He restores discarded old-time buggies, and he builds horse-drawn sleighs.

"I got hooked on them when my dad gave me his old beat-up wagon and challenged me to make it look like new," Randy disclosed.

The project, he related, was almost a bigger bite than he could chew. But he kept working at it and finally came up with a reconditioned buckboard he was proud to live with. The rebuilt buggy, needless to say, pleased his dad so much that he kept it as one of his prized possessions.

Randy is a resident of Centerville, some 15 miles north of Salt Lake City. He comes from a long line of Randalls that were some of the earliest settlers in the area. His occupation is city public works director. But he has an interest in early wagons and sleighs that stems, in part, from his pioneer heritage and his wanting to know more about old-time kinds of transportation.

Restoring buggies is now an important

part of Randy's off-duty hours. He converted his 2-car garage into a workshop and made other adjustments around the house to make room for the equipment and other items he needed to rebuild wagons. He searches for and studies whatever literature he can find on the subject, and he never fails to attend a show or event that might include old buggies of one kind or another. The real challenges, however, come from the many problems that arise and need to be solved when he rebuilds a wagon.

"Nowadays, you can't just go to a store or a parts supplier and pick up whatever you need to restore a wagon," Randy said. "Stores don't carry the items and there's no such thing around here as a supplier of wagon parts." That being the case, he said, when he needs a part for a wagon he usually has to make it himself by hand. To do that, he went on to say, he had to learn some of the fine points of blacksmithing and a few woodworking techniques, because rebuilding a wagon takes more than simply repairing a broken slat here or a damaged board there.

"Usually, when I get a wagon, it's in bad shape, so I strip it down to where there's nothing left but the frame," Randy said. "Then I redo the whole thing — the

woodwork, the bed, the seat, the sideboards — everything. Including the wheels."

Some of the woodwork on a buggy is relatively simple to make and assemble, according to Randy, and some is quite complicated. Wheels, however, are an entirely different story. Spokes and rims present a whole series of knotty problems ranging all the way from shaping them to spacing them precisely on the hub.

In his early attempts at rebuilding wagons, Randy said he spent hours at a lathe making spokes for the wheels. Some of them were very good. But too many, he said, ended up in the scrap pile because of improper turning or some other defects.

Realizing that something had to be done to improve the making of spokes, Randy put on his thinking cap and invented a machine to duplicate spokes.

His invention, he explained, works something like a key-making machine where a key is placed on one side of a machine and a slug is clamped parallel to it. Randy said his spoke duplicator works on the same principle, using a pattern spoke on a lathe and a wood blank on a parallel lathe. The two lathes work together, one lathe tracing the pattern

See THE BUGGY BUILDER on C-4

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The buggy builder

Continued from C-3

while the other lathe cuts a new spoke from the piece of wood.

"With the spoke machine," Randy said, "I can duplicate any kind of a spoke for a wheel and make any number of spokes exactly alike."

But inventing the spoke machine didn't solve all of Randy's problems.

Old-time buckboards, he said, had steel rims. He could not find a supplier for rims or a plant that would take on the job of occasionally making rims. His own attempts at making steel rims convinced him that hand-made rims simply were not adequate. So he decided to build a machine to do the job. He combed the area and found a couple of rollers. Then he put them on a special mechanism he developed. The rollers were powered by electricity, and when they turned, they pressed strips of steel into wagon rims.

Old wagons are quite hard to come by, Randy said, so when he hears about one, he goes after it post haste. Once he went as far as Cedar City to pick up a wagon he heard was available.

"The kind of buggies I rebuild were used in the early days for light jobs like hauling small loads to and from the store or for going to Sunday school," Randy said. They are not the covered wagons so often shown in John Wayne movies nor are they the heavy wagons that were used to transport freight or bulky loads.

They were small and trim.

The joy of rebuilding a wagon is complete for Randy when he hitches the wagon to a horse and rides in a July 4th or 24th parade.

And he remembers special occasions when the first buggy he rebuilt were put to old-time uses. His brother, Todd, was in high school at one of those times, and his dad hitched the buggy to a horse and drove Todd and his date to the junior prom.

Rebuilding wagons is only one of Randy's off-duty diversions. He also builds sleighs.

"I build sleighs from the ground up," Randy stated, explaining that they are the horse-drawn type that comes to mind when one sings or hears the song "Jingle Bells."

Sleigh building is complicated by woodwork that forms curves to give the sleigh a delicate appearance. Sleigh runners are somewhat difficult to make, according to Randy, but nowhere near as hard as making wheels for wagons.

In the days of the early settlers, sleighs were as popular as wagons, particularly during long cold winters with plenty of snow. There was no snow-moving equipment then, so the streets and roads remained snow-laden until the spring melt.

Today, however, streets are most likely to be cleared of snow within a few hours after a storm, so sleighs are really vehicles of the past. Yet there are times when snowfall is heavy and sleighs can again come into their own for a brief time.

"When snow hangs in there like it has this winter," Randy said, "it's ideal for a sleigh on a side street or a country road." He explained this by saying that he frequently has taken his family for sleigh rides during the past couple of months.

But the real thrill of sleigh riding, he said, is during a holiday season of heavy lingering snow. It's been that kind of a yuletide season more than once. Randy said he remembers them well, because they are the old-fashioned times when his father and mother and the whole family of children and grandchildren piled into sleighs and cruised up and down Centerville's Main Street singing Christmas carols and wishing everyone a happy holiday.

■ Mr. Jackson is a freelance writer living in Centerville.

WEDDING

Patton-Ross

Susan D. Patton and Mark W. Ross were married Tuesday morning in the Salt Lake Temple.

The newlyweds will be honored this evening at a wedding reception at the home of the bridegroom's mother, Maza A. Ross, Salt Lake City. He is also a son of the late J. Richard Ross.

The bride is a daughter of Barbara J. Hamilton, Ashland, Mass., and Charles M. Patton, Natick, Mass. She is a graduate of Fitchburg State College and is doing post graduate work at Brigham Young University.

The bridegroom is a graduate of the University of Utah and has fulfilled an LDS California Arcadia mission.

Manhattan Mayhem

Early Summers

part of the continuing romance "Manhattan Mayhem." In the last issue, Marty discovers a possible suspect in the murder of Ken's would-be murderer.

"What's that?" I asked. I swear there was no jealousy, as I was a retreating figure.

"Krissie, my secretary."

"Did it as though it meant nothing, a day in the week a man had a woman who looked like that. I tell you, if I had a thing as a 10, Krissie was a 15. I honestly felt that she was too good to be alive. I figured any man in his prime a prime candidate to knock off to get his secretary."

"Is she married?"

"I backed up. 'Who, Krissie?'"

"She's got a boyfriend, though."

"?"

"I backed up with more attention this time. It's this big interest in my secretary and women or something?"

"But I figured you were."

"n."

"Now come you're not the one seeing who would think the boss would have an opportunity."

"I was baffled. 'She doesn't interest me.'"

"I could not adequately describe his indifference. But it was just his indifference. 'What about her that doesn't interest you?'"

"I took his pen and ran his fingers through his wavy hair, giving it a ruffled appearance. Immediately improved his appearance. Like men in business suits. They were messlike."

"I tell you? I guess the chemist was there. Why, are you attracted to the looking man you meet?"

"I sure that was a serious question. I was attracted to every good-looking man. I personally didn't know any man who wasn't. 'I think she's your problem.'"

"The problem — she's a great secretary, intelligent, hardworking, good with the money."

"I must bet she is. 'Any of your colleagues interested in her?'"

"A few of them are."

"Not this theory, Coach, and it says she's trying to kill you to get your money."

"I was being impressed, he laughed. 'I'll knock you off the wall, Marty.'"

less likely women."

"Marty, there's just one thing wrong with it. If anyone here wanted my secretary bad enough to kill to get her, I'd gladly turn her over to said person. In fact, if anyone wanted her for any reason, I probably would. It's no problem finding another secretary."

"You're not normal," I muttered.

"Explain that remark."

I tried to keep my tone indifferent as I said, "You tried to kiss me last night but you're not interested in Krissie? You call that normal?"

"You have a lot of nerve trying to define normal, Marty. A man tries to kiss you and ends up on the floor. Is that your idea of normal?"

"I didn't think it was a good idea, that's all."

"Then couldn't you have just said no?"

"I don't know, it just seemed easier at the time. Look, next time I'll say no, OK?"

"What next time? If you think I'd ever try that again, you're crazy."

I was a little sorry to hear that.

"Tell me something, Marty, will you?"

"Sure."



"Do you like me?"

I shrugged. "I find you tolerable." Sometimes, I'm a real master at the art of understatement.

"Tolerable."

"Yeah. You're OK."

"I'm sure glad I've made such a good impression on you."

I looked past him out the window. "Look, you're a client. I don't fool around with clients, that's all."

"Particularly clients you find just tolerable, right?"

"I don't make any personal distinctions. Clients are clients. Friends are friends, clients are clients and never the twain shall meet and all that." My reputation as a wit was secure enough to hazard an occasional cliché.

I was saved from elaborating any further when his phone rang. As soon as he picked it up, his eyes went to me and I knew it was the phantom again. He pushed a button on the phone and his caller's voice came out loud and clear.

"Stay away from her, Couch, uh, I mean Coach," the voice said. "Do you need that?"